0: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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Mr. Brayton a little later did the same for the Pwo dialect. The desire to read and to have an education arose among the Karens who became Christians, and as the Sgaw tribe has come into the Christian Church in much larger numbers than the Pwo it has consequently developed a larger literature. The greater part of this is of a distinctly Christian nature, designed to promote the spiritual life as well as to give general information. The people have not had time to create a modern literature of their own although a small beginning had been made before the Japanese invasion. No doubt out of the hardships of these war years a new literature will be born.

VII

DRESS

The Karens had a distinctive dress in their primitive state. Not only was there a national style but each individual village in the hills had its distinctive variations which marked a man's origin.

The general dress of the Karens was an uncut garment made by sewing together two breadths of cloth as they came from the rude loom, leaving a hole in the middle of one end for the head and two small holes at the upper corners for the arms. It was made of their own home-grown cotton, which was raised, carded, spun and woven, as well as dyed, by their women-folk. The ground was usually white as it came unbleached from the loom. They interwove decorations of red and sometimes of black.

Among the Sgaw Karens the smock (called a *Hsay*) was white with a wide lower border of red. The garment reached from the shoulders to the calves and was the only bit of clothing worn. It was large and

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178 fully blended together, but the weaving of these skirt
was almost a lost art at the time of the invasion.

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562 Little children were wrapped in blankets or in gar
ments that were cast off by their elders. When rompin
boys began to run around they did not bother with clothe
until they were five or six, or even older. Little girl
usually began to wrap a small *longyi* about their waist
at three or four. Elders often went about with scant loi
cloths, but very seldom did they appear without an
clothing.

291
177 With the rise of national self-consciousness, th
Karens tried an adaptation of their national dress and
finding the old smock ill-adapted to modern conditions
they invented a jacket cut after the style of the ordinar
European lounge jacket made of the native cloth an
embroidered with some of the designs of the origina
smocks. There were many patterns of these and the
became very popular among the younger men in the citie
and towns and among older boys in schools. They wer
a sort of blazer such as is worn in schools in Europe o
[562] America. A few Karens adopted the European style o
men's dress, but few women in the cities wore anythin
except the usual Burmese costume.

291
184 Among the Bwès and Pakus, another tribe nea
562 Toungoo, the women all wore skirts of an identical patter
773 This had a black ground with two or three narro
horizontal stripes at about the height of the knees. Bu
among the Sgaws there was a large number of pattern
The most common was a conventional design of horizont
stripes of various shades of red and in the middle
"python skin" in clouded pattern. This commemorate
the old myth of the woman who was stolen by th

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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[291]

legendary white python and who was released only by the sacrifice of her husband. On her release she wove the pattern of the python's skin into her skirt thus offering him the greatest insult that she knew. (This incident is related in the story of "Ku Law Lay and Naw Mu Eh".)

515
[312]

Bathing is an important item of comfort in a hot country, being not so much for cleanliness as for coolness. In the hills where the water is icy cold as it comes from the mountain springs, and where often the village is located far above the water streams, bathing is not indulged in to any great extent. Nor do Karens mind dirty clothes, for they know that much washing wears them out, as they have to depend upon rubbing and pounding rather than upon soap. In the seclusion of the mountain forests they often play about in the water without clothes. On the plains, where bathing is more common either in the open rivers or at the village well, they

Karen male costume

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The organization of the Baptist churches has been an important factor in developing a sense of responsibility among the Karens and an understanding of the principles of self-government, even though there may still be much for them to learn. 177 795

Even a casual observer will notice the great difference between the Karens who have become Christians and those who have either remained in their own animism or even become Buddhists. The difference in the appearance of their villages may not be so striking but officers have often remarked to me that the Christian villagers have a different air, they are a little more cleanly, have their schools and are better clothed. They also have a much lower crime record. Their young people branch out into better positions and become more prosperous. 184 795

The villages that remain animistic are still held in the slavery of their taboos and their mentality remains static. The village life remains unchanged. Custom is their master. Progress is considered dangerous. Education is not encouraged. If they do go to school it is to the Buddhist monastery, if there happens to be one. In some cases however ambitious children demand to go to the Christian schools and branch out into progressive ways which they learn there.

During the last quarter century there has been a movement among the animistic Karens who do not become Christian to turn to the Buddhist culture and religion. This is partly due to the movement to make Buddhism the national religion of the country and to try to win all the inhabitants to its practices, and partly due to the fact that the Buddhist culture is superior to the original Karen way of life. In turning away from their ancient 177 795

23: Benedict
184●192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

ALl Southeast Asia
Karen AP7

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./